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MAL MATTERS

COUNTRY VENEZUELA

SUBJECT

DOI 21 \$22 OCTOBER 1976

TSIT OF AN EMISSARY OF VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES

PEREZ TO EXPLAIN LATTER'S MOTIVES IN ATTENDING FUNERAL OF

ORLANDO LETELIER

CHILE, SANTIAGO (5 NOVEMBER 1976)

FIELD, NO.

A RETIRED MILITARY OFFICER WITH GOOD CONNECTIONS

MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. HE IS A FAIRLY RELLABLE REPORTER.

E1 NOV 16 1976

1. ON 21 OCTOBER 1976, ENRIQUE

IDENTIFIED AS A PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT

CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ, ARRIVED IN CHILE AND REQUESTED A

MEETING WITH GENERAL GUSTAVOV L E I G H, AIR FORCE MEMBER OF THE

WOV 18/976

SECRET

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JUNTA. THE FOLLOWING DAY, RIVAS MET LEIGH AND TOLD HIM THAT HE HAD BEEN SENT BY PRESIDENT PEREZ TO EXPLAIN THE LATTER'S INTENTIONS IN PERSONALLY ATTENDING THE FUNERAL OF ORLANDO LETEL IER, FORMER CHILEAN AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES WHO WAS ASSASSINATED IN WASHINGTON, D.C. ON 21 SEPTEMBER 1976 AND RURIED IN CARACAS.

- AFFRONT THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT BY HIS ACTION, BUT RATHER THAT HE ATTENDED THE FUNERAL TO SHOW HIS RESPECT FOR VENEZUELA'S DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS. RIVAS SAID THAT PRESIDENT PEREZ HOPED HIS ACTION HAD NOT BEEN MISINTERPRETED BY THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT AND THAT THERE WOULD BE NO HARD FEELINGS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS OVER THE MATTER.
- 3. GENERAL LEIGH SAID THAT PRESIDENT PEREZ' ACTION HAD
 BEEN BADLY RECEIVED IN CHILE AND THAT HE PERSONALLY FOUND IT
 DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND THE PRESIDENT'S MOTIVES. LEIGH SAID THAT
 HE UNDERSTOOD PEREZ' RESPECT FOR DEMOCRACY, BUT HE FELT THAT IN
 LETELIER'S CASE, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENT TO SEND A

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(dissem controls)

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REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE. THE DECISION TO

PERSONALLY ATTEND THE FUNERAL HAS BEEN USED BY CHILE'S ENEMIES

TO EMBARRASS THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT.

- 4. WHEN QUERIED ABOUT THE VENEZUELAN INVESTIGATION INTO
 THE LETELIER ASSASSINATION, RIVAS SAID THAT VENEZUELAN AUTHORITIES
 HAD GONE ABOUT AS FAR AS THEY WANTED TO GO IN QUESTIONING ORLANDO
 B O S C H, CUBAN EXILE LEADER, REGARDING HIS POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT.
 RIVAS POINTED OUT THAT BOSCH HAD POWERFUL FRIENDS CLOSE TO THE
 VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT AND THAT PRESSURE WAS BEING APPLIED ON
 BOSCH'S BEHALF. HE EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT ANY MORE INFORMATION WOULD
 BE REVEALED BECAUSE OF THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT'S RELUCTANCE TO
 PRESS THE MATTER TOO FAR.
- 5. (SOURCE COMMENT: THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF RIVAS' TRIP WAS TO EXPLORE THE CHILEAN ATTITUDE TOWARD A PROPOSAL BY PRESIDENT PEREZ TO HOLD A MEETING OF PRESIDENTS OF THE ANDEAN PACT COUNTRIES TO TRY TO RESOLVE THE IMPASSE BETWEEN CHILE AND THE OTHER PACT MEMBERS OVER IMPORT DUTIES AND FOREIGN INVESTMENT. VENEZUELA DID NOT PLAN TO APPROACH ANY OTHER COUNTRIES UNTIL THE CHILEANS AGREED TO THE IDEA; HOWEVER, THIS MATTER WAS OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS WITH

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1881/10ation) (dissem controls)

CHILE'S FORMAL WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PACT ON 30 OCTOBER.)

- 6. IN REQUESTING HIS MEETING WITH LEIGH, RIVAS ASKED
 THAT HIS PRESENCE IN CHILE NOT BE MADE A MATTER OF PUBLIC
 KNOWLEDGE. FOR THIS REASON, THE MEETING WAS ARRANGED TO TAKE
 PLACE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE RATHER THAN AT DIEGO PORTALES
 GOVERNMENT HOUSE, WHERE THERE IS A GREATER RISK OF DISCOVERY BY
 REPORTERS.
- 7. (HEADQUARTERS COMMENT: A REPRESENTATIVE OF THIS AGENCY IN CARACAS COMMENTED THAT ALTHOUGH RIVAS HAS, ON OCCASION, HANDLED SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE PEREZ ADMINISTRATION, SUCH AN ASSIGNMENT AS DESCRIBED IN THIS REPORT IS UNUSUAL. IT IS OUT OF CHARACTER FOR PEREZ TO EXPLAIN OR APOLOGIZE FOR HIS ACTIONS AND IT APPEARS STRANGE THAT A PEREZ REPRESENTATIVE WOULD ADMIT THAT BOSCH HAS POWERFUL FRIENDS IN THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT WHEN THE GOVERNMENT HAS GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS TO ATTEMPT TO HIDE THIS FACT.)
- 8. FIELD DISSEM: EMBASSY AT SANTIAGO; SENT TO CARACAS.
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